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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to replace the ignorance, misinformation, and negative stereotypes that many students hold about the Soviet Union and its peoples with a reasoned and rational outlook based on critical thinking and class activities. The introduction to these activities provides background and a rationale for teaching about the Soviet Union. The first section of the activities, "Raising Questions...Gathering Information," contains 11 group activities to stimulate thinking; find out what students know; and examine assumptions, perceptions, and information, and their sources. The second section, "More to Explore," contains 19 activities to motivate further study and to provide some background in Soviet history, language, and culture. Examples of the Soviet calendar, the cyrillic alphabet, and maps of the Soviet Union are included. A "Teachers Fact Sheet" of general information on the Soviet Union, a list of 19 recommended resources (organizations and publications), and the "Cheeverwood" cartoon series (M. Fry) on student's attitudes about the Soviet Union are also provided. (PPB)

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GETTING ACQUAINTED:
THINKING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

Elementary Teaching Activities · Days of Dialogue, 1986

These materials were conceived and collected by a group of ESR members who are meeting regularly to discuss how to teach about the Soviet Union. Others with experience and an interest in thinking about the Soviet Union made valuable contributions.

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by aaron Turner
8 yr. old

St. Basil's Cathedral

TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Overview for Teachers

Why Study the Soviet Union?
Using the Activities
Introducing the Soviet Union . . . To Kids
Questions and Thoughts About the Soviet Union:
The ESR Yearbook Project
Teachers' Fact Sheet

Recommended Resources for Teaching About the Soviet Union in the Elementary Grades

I. Raising Questions...Gathering Information

Class "Doodle"
Brainstorming
Interviewing Others
Writing About What We're Thinking
Inviting Guests
Digging Deeper
The ESR Yearbook Project

II. More to Explore

History & Holidays
Maps
 Republics Puzzle
Language
 Alphabet
 The Name Game
 Map of the USSR
 Cognates
The Fast Facts Game
A Children's Craft

AN OVERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

GETTING ACQUAINTED:
THINKING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

WHY STUDY THE SOVIET UNION?

Ignorance and Misinformation

Perhaps the first reason for learning more about the Soviet Union ourselves, as educators, and teaching our students about that country is our ignorance. In a 1985 New York Times poll 76% of adult Americans questioned were unable to name Gorbachev as the leader of the Soviet Union. 44% did not know that the Soviet Union and the U.S. fought on the same side during World War II, and 28% of this group thought we had fought against each other. Out of forty college freshmen responding to the question, "Nuclear weapons have only been used once. Which country used them, and on whom?" several students replied that the Japanese had dropped an atom bomb on Pearl Harbor; others stated that it was Germany, and still others said, "No, it was the Soviet Union." Only four students correctly answered both parts of the question.

Beyond Negative Stereotypes

Second, young people are already being educated about the Soviet Union by the popular culture - television, movies, newspapers, and advertising - with misinformation and stereotypes that can be dangerous. The culture's portrayal of the Soviet Union lampoons them as backward, uncouth, dumb, even primitive. Such negative portrayals may have validity, but they omit many large aspects of the culture, people, and life of the Soviet Union. Americans end up with an incomplete, distorted, even caricaturized view of the Soviets.

Recently, in a Boston high school, an 11th grade student commented after viewing a slide show on the fifteen Soviet republics,

"How can such a beautiful country have such bad people?"

When we ask this same class to write about whether or not they think they should learn about the Soviets, and why, another student responds,

"Yes, so if there's a war, we'll know what to do."

A 10th grader, in another school, blurts out angrily,

"You're trying to get us to see the Russians as human beings!"

And when a 5th grader, during the first Reagan-Gorbachev summit, was asked what he knew about Gorbachev, he said,

"I don't know very much, but I know he's a bad guy."

While such perceptions about the Soviet Union may have been less harmful in earlier eras, in a nuclear world lack of rounded knowledge about the United States' conflicts with the Soviet Union is potentially catastrophic.

The Arms Race

A third reason for studying about the Soviet Union is that the nuclear arms race is driven by our relationship with the Soviets. The massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons in both countries is an outgrowth of this relationship, a consequence of the Cold War. The two most significant issues in U.S.-Soviet relations seem to be our deep differences and the perceived Soviet threat to the United States.

When teaching this material, it is probably a mistake to employ a glib universality about the common humanity of ordinary Americans and Soviets, if it overlooks the real differences in values, world view, priorities, beliefs, rules of behavior, interests, and historical experience of the two countries. Many people also believe that the Soviet Union wants to, and can, take over the U.S. - and even the world. Others believe that, even though Soviet leaders continue to cite Marxist-Leninist principles about the historical inevitability of the triumph of communism, this view is exaggerated or unrealistic. Separating real threats from false ones, without being naive, is probably the most contentious item in the U.S.-Soviet relationship and is a formidable reason for increased educational efforts about the Soviet Union.

A First Step

Finally, educators around the country report that whenever they try to teach about subjects crucial in a nuclear world, such as war and peace, security and international conflict, deterrence theory and nuclear arsenals, the invariably they encounter the question "What about the Russians?" They find it is critical to address this question. While neither knowledge nor understanding alone can resolve this entire question or prevent confrontation, they are a first step. In a democracy we are obligated to understand our responsibility to become informed in more depth about the importance of U.S.-Soviet relations to the survival of humanity.

CHALLENGES IN LEARNING AND TEACHING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

Strong Feelings

We have found that of all the themes related to nuclear age education, the study of the Soviet Union may be the most difficult. While discussions about the nuclear dilemma tend to be intense, emotions toward the Soviet Union seem even more deep-seated. Feelings tend to be more explosive, discussions more heated, aned beliefs more quickly polarized than about almost any other issue. Such strong feelings can block learning.

Public Opinion - Complexity and Ambivalence

In large part this may be due to the highly complex attitudes of the American public toward the Soviets, best documented in a 1984 study by the Public Agenda Foundation. The survey reveals a deep dualism in American attitudes towards the Soviets. The public believes that no country can "win" the arms race, but that one can "lose" it. They hold the Soviet people in high esteem, but distrust the government. They believe that the Soviet Union seizes every possible advantage and violates its promises, but is genuinely interested in negotiations and has legitimate security concerns. Finally, the American public rejects the values of communism as opposed to all its fundamental beliefs, but does not view communism as a threat to America. The conclusion drawn from this survey is that any policy formulations must address both dimensions of this delicate balance in the national psyche or they will never succeed.

We face a similar challenge in teaching about the Soviet Union. If we teach only to one side of this public opinion - regardless of which side, and regardless of whether we're in elementary school, high school,

universities, or adult education - we will not be successful in educating the next generations for the establishment of better communication and cooperation.

The challenge of addressing both sides of these public attitudes can be helped by acknowledging two realities. First, friendship is not necessary to improve the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Our different social systems and values will probably always lead to some rivalry and tension. But the United States and the Soviet Union must lower international tensions and eliminate the risk of nuclear annihilation. They can do so through cooperation and by resolving their conflicts peacefully, while still acknowledging ideological incompatibility.
Essential Knowledge and Understanding.

Second, while warm relations and trust are not necessary for cooperation, knowledge and understanding are. Education is the key to achieving knowledge and understanding.

We are also challenged to obtain a more complete picture of the Soviet Union. In the United States most information about the Soviet Union is negative. Many educators feel, in consequence, that they should counteract this incomplete information by humanizing the Soviets. Usually, they choose a cultural approach, such as information that cribs and playpens in the Soviet Union are collective; that only 3% of Soviet men between the ages of 17 - 20 survived World War II; or that 70% of Soviet marriages break up in the first ten years.

But a purely cultural emphasis can also lead to an unbalanced picture of the Soviet Union. Additionally, this approach can provoke teelings that the teacher is biased, disloyal or unpatriotic, or parroting the Soviet line. While in itself this is not necessarily reason for a different apoproach, a better reason is that if an "audience" is triggered to red-bait, it often cannot "hear" or learn.

One can also run into these attitudes before any teaching has begun. For example, when twenty-five students in a Massachusetts high school petitioned for a course on the Soviet Union, no one in the Social Studies department would teach it. When a teacher was finally found, one parent called the teacher to ask: "If my son takes this course, will he still be able to get into the military?" Another parent wrote to the teacher asking whether her daughter's college of choice would reject her if she took a course on the Soviet Union.

Teachers who have only three or five class hours available, per year, also encounter a final challenge: finding a way to convey the complexity of the Soviet Union, with its fifteen republics in eleven time zones stretching across Europe and Asia and its 100 languages.

The great educational need for information, knowledge, and understanding that can improve communication seems to outweigh such challenges. The governments of the two superpowers have recently recognized these realities. Once again, they are engaging in exchanges and negotiating about arms control and security issues. At the first summit meeting in Geneva in November, 1985 President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed a new agreement for resuming official exchanges between the two countries, for the first time since 1979. To expand direct contact between citizens of both countries they endorsed a People-to-People Initiative. As President Reagan has said:

> "enduring peace requires openness, honest communications, and opportunities for our peoples to get to know one another directly...[We must] find as yet undiscovered avenues where American and Soviet citizens can cooperate fruitfully for the benefit of mankind...Certainly nothing is more worthy of our attention than finding ways to reach out and establish better communication with the people and government of the Soviet Union."

Susan Alexander

Susan Alexander
Director
August 28, 1986

USING THE ACTIVITIES

General objectives for this unit include:

* To examine assumptions and determine the sources of information and perceptions about the USSR;

* To learn and practice the skills of critical thinking, evaluation, creative problem solving, and self-direction;

* To participate in group activities in ways that use knowledge, intellectual skills, and interpersonal skills;

* To develop understanding about the USSR based on data, concepts, and generalizations from its history, geography, political science, economics, and anthropology;

* To recognize and repect the similarities and the differences between the US and the USSR.

The introduction to these activities gives background and ESR's rationale for teaching about the Soviet Union. The first section of the activities, **Raising Questions ... Gathering Information** contains mainly group activities to stimulate thinking, to find out what students know, and to examine assumptions, perceptions and information and their sources. The second section, **More to Explore** contains some activities to motivate further study and to give a small taste of Soviet history, language and culture.

A comprehensive course on the Soviet Union could take weeks and might include study of the land, people, language, education, science and industry, the arts, government and history -- all of the facets of a society that differentiate it from its neighbors. Such courses exist in some schools, but many are unable to devote even the amount of time

necessary to study our own country. **Getting Acquainted: Thinking About the Soviet Union** has been written differently from other teaching materials on the Soviet Union of which we are aware. Children are expected to take responsibility for the material, to realize what they believe and to examine how they came to these beliefs. Examining the sources of assumptions is an important component of these activities.

Section I, **Raising Questions ... Gathering Information,** gives children a model for examining any important issue, not simply "The Russians." Reasons for studying the Soviet Union over another controversial topic are cited above, but the way in which we approach the questioning process may be applied to any society, including our own. Local issues that are being debated by parents or teachers would be as appropriate to teach in the way described in Section I as teaching about the Soviets, and could be approached with many of the same goals: to examine the reasons and feelings behind a controversy; to learn that many points of view exist; to understand that problems cannot always be seen in terms of "black and white;" to understand that some questions do not have answers; to form convictions and to feel able to act on them.

The central activities in this packet are in Section I. From these activities the assumptions and questions to be explored will become evident. The children themselves will determine much of the content of the study. You may find that your entire week is spent talking about Soviet children or why the US and the USSR perceive each other as enemies. If you do nothing other than concentrate on one concern that your students clearly express you will have used these activities in the way that we intended them. Children will learn that their questions matter and are worth exploring in

CHEEVERWOOD
by Michael Fry
TODAY IN GEOGRAPHY WE'LL BE DISCUSSING THE SOVIET UNION.
WILL SOMEONE VOLUNTEER TO SHOW US WHERE IT'S LOCATED ON THE GLOBE?
THAT'S WISCONSIN. TRY AGAIN.
YOU'RE SURE THEY'RE FROM EARTH?

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depth. They will spend time thinking about important ideas, separating fact from opinion, evaluating other's perspectives and recognizing prejudice and bias in each person's viewpoint, including one's own. Parents will become involved as their children ask them what they think. Our intention is that participation and interest will grow in your class as children learn respect for feelings and ideas, both their own and those of others. The activities in this packet are meant to be used during the Days of Dialogue, but we hope that you will find yourself and your class coming back to the questions you have raised together throughout the year.

The readings, games, and activities in **More to Explore** follow up on some of the questioning and examining activities in the previous section. They are not meant to provide a complete picture of Soviet life. We at ESR do not think that a solely cultural and historical study can in any way substitute for the thinking process that children go through when they examine their own perspectives and those of others on any controversial topic. The breadth of Russian and Soviet history and culture would be impossible to depict in such a short packet. Sources for studying them are usually available in school or public libraries. The activities in Section II are provided to stimulate interest, offer some fascinating facts and some opportunities for experiencing aspects of Soviet culture that may be especially interesting and fun for children. We hope they will also can provoke curiosity about topics for further research by students.

These activities attempt to take into consideration the different ways in which children become interested in a subject. Some children will enjoy the opportunity for class participation that the activities in Section I encourage; other children are "listeners," and may excel at research skills or art or foreign languages. The activities are here to provide a way for these children to enjoy the study as actively as those who are more immediately stimulated by class discussion. The important point is to find a way to help all the students to share their questions, feelings, and information. The subject matter will be generated by the questions and concerns of the students. For younger children, however, some of the activities in this section will introduce them to a society about which they may have very little information. Some of the activities are "just for fun," to maintain interest in the subject or to try to answer some of the questions about the Soviet Union that may have arisen in class.

INTRODUCING THE SOVIET UNION . . . TO KIDS

Creating the context in which you introduce information about the Soviet Union is especially important in the elementary grades, when complete understanding of the complicated nature of current events and international relations is not the purpose of teaching.

Let your class know that they will be spending time during the week (or however long you plan to spend) on thinking and learning about Russia, or the Soviet Union. If you are using these activities during the Days of Dialogue, you might tell them that other children around the country will also be spending a week talking about the Soviet Union. Ask them why they think they ought to learn about it. Answers may vary from "Because it's so big" to "Because they're our enemy" to "I don't know." You may want to talk with your students about why they think it is important to study any country, including their own. In addition to studying the Soviet Union for reasons given above, an important consideration is that every society has the same tasks to accomplish but accomplishes them in different ways. Learning about some of these ways may make our understanding of our own country clearer, helping us to become more concerned and committed citizens.

CHEEVERWOOD by Michael Fry

AS YOU CAN SEE BY THESE PICTURES, SOVIET CITIZENS ARE A LOT LIKE YOU AND ME...
WAIT A SECOND! YOU MEAN THEY'RE NOT NUKE-TOTING AUTOMATONS BENT ON THE DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIZATION AS WE KNOW IT?!
Geography
WHERE DO YOU KIDS GET THIS STUFF?!
I SAW IT IN A DOCUMENTARY.
A DOCUMENTARY?
"ROCKY IV."
Geography

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QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION: A NATIONAL YEARBOOK PROJECT

This Days of Dialogue program focuses on the Soviet Union in part because no collected information exists on where or how teachers are teaching about the topic. What do students all over the US think and know about the Soviet Union? We do not know enough about what public perceptions are about the USSR, and how these affect our children. Instead of conducting an evaluation, where we ask you the usual questions -- what did you like, what was left out, what could we do differently next time -- we decided to ask you to ask your students to share their perceptions, questions and concerns about the Soviet Union with us, and we in turn will share them with other students, educators and parents.

The activities in this packet are designed to get students thinking about a controversial subject they may have never before discussed. It's a subject about which there are many strong feelings. We would like to know what some of those feelings are. We would like to know what you and your classes would like to know more about. We would like to know how we can help you.

CHEEVERWOOD
by Michael Fry
WE'RE IN LUCK, CHILDREN! DUE TO THE SUMMIT AGREEMENT ON CULTURAL EXCHANGE, WE HAVE AN ACTUAL RUSSIAN WITH US TODAY!
MEET BORIS HADENOFF FROM THE BUREAU OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS.
ARE YOU GOING TO WASH OUR BRAINS NOW OR LATER
THIS IS GOING TO BE A LOT TOUGHER THAN I THOUGHT.
WILL IT STING?

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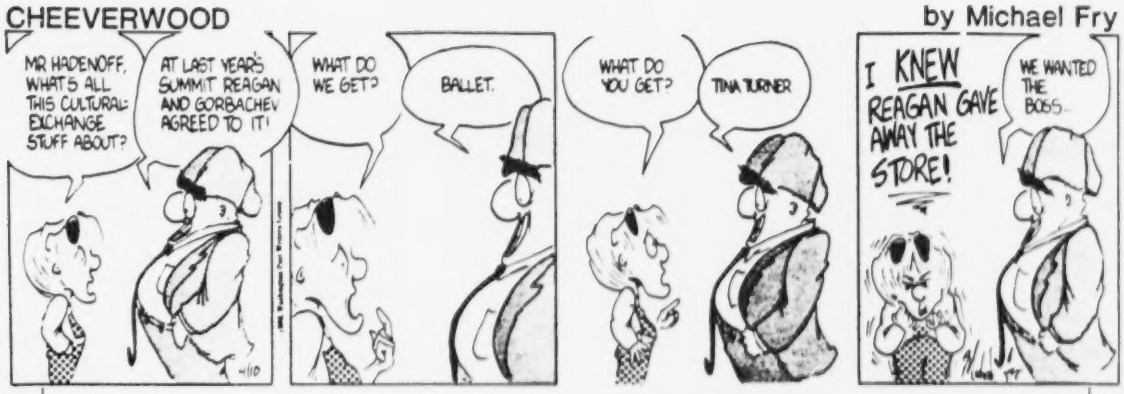
CHEEVERWOOD
by Michael Fry
MR HADENOFF, WHAT'S ALL THIS CULTURAL EXCHANGE STUFF ABOUT?
AT LAST YEAR'S SUMMIT REAGAN AND GORBACHEV AGREED TO IT!
WHAT DO WE GET?
BALLET.
WHAT DO YOU GET?
TINA TURNER
I KNEW REAGAN GAVE AWAY THE STORE!
WE WANTED THE BOSS.

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ESR asks you to share the material that you and your class generate during the time that you spend thinking about the Soviet Union. More details on how to participate in our National Yearbook Project are included in the packet. Send us the questions, the drawings, the information you gather. Send us black and white photographs of classroom projects. Send us information about your students that they would like to share with Soviet children. ESR will publish a selection of the questions and thoughts in 1987 as a representation of what children in the US think or would like to know about their Soviet counterparts. Every class that participates in the Yearbook will receive a copy. We hope that some schools in the Soviet Union will receive copies. The Yearbook will be given to educational administrators to show them what their students and teachers think is important to learn.

Having found out what more we would all like to know about the Soviet Union, ESR will continue to look for new ways of thinking and teaching on this important topic and ways of sharing these ideas with students and educators around the country, and around the world.

TEACHER'S FACT SHEET

While this packet emphasizes questioning and information gathering as class activities, having a fact sheet with some general information may be useful and fascinating background for you. You will probably want to explore through further research some of the facts below. One excellent resource is provided by Roberta Snow and George Perkovich in their high school curriculum, Thinking About the Soviet Union. (See Resources.)

Basic geographic, historical, and ethnic information about the Soviet Union and its fifteen republics is readily available in encyclopedias. Look in the volume under "Russia" or "Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. The name "Russia" has not been the official name of the USSR since 1922.

Size

At 8,650,000 square miles, the USSR is the largest political unit in history. Larger than the US and Canada combined, it covers nearly one-sixth of the land surface of the Earth.

The railroad journey from Kaliningrad in the west to Vladivostok in the east, takes 9 days and 9 nights.

The USSR has 11 times zones. The US has 4, not including Alaska or Hawaii.

The Soviet Union crosses 170 degrees longitude, nearly halfway around the world (6800 miles). It traverses 45 degrees latitude, half the distance from the equator to the North Pole (3200 miles.)

Boundaries

The borders of the USSR span more than 49,500 miles. 12,500 miles are shared with 12 other countries.

The accessibility of the Soviet land borders make it particularly vulnerable to other nations. The west faces Europe. The south-central boundary is open to Mongolia and China.

The coastline is the longest in the world --37,000 miles. Most of it is frozen more than half the year. Yet, Murmansk, the northern-most port, inside the Arctic Circle, is warmed enough by the Gulf Stream to stay ice-free. Nearly all ports are distant from populated areas and have their access to the open seas controlled by other nations.

Location

The Soviet Union is best compared with Canada, because of the similarity in latitude between the two countries. Moscow, the geographic center of European Russia with 8 million people is at the latitude of the Belcher Islands in Hudson Bay. Leningrad, with 4.7 million people is on the latitude of the southern border of the Northwest Territories. Sochi, a Black Sea resort, is parallel to Vermont, just south of the Canadian border.

Climate

Because the USSR is a continental country with nearly 75% of its land 250 miles from a major body of water, temperature variations are among the most extreme in the world. The USSR has all climates except the tropical rainforest.

Most of the Soviet Union is a dry country with an annual precipitation of 24 inches or less. Low rainfall means greater variability and susceptibility to drought. 85% of the Soviet Union's rainfall comes from the North Atlantic Coast.

CHEEVERWOOD
by Michael Fry
THE REASON I'VE COME FROM RUSSIA TO TALK TO YOU TODAY IS TO REFUTE THE SOVIET STEREOTYPES IN AMERICAN COMMERCIALS AND FILM. ARE WE RUSSIANS REALLY DRAB, TOTALITARIAN DOLTS BENT ON WORLD DOMINATION?
YES!
IT WAS A RHETORICAL QUESTION.
NICE TIE, THOUGH

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Topography

The Soviet Union tilts toward the Arctic Ocean, edged by mountains from the southwest to the northeast.

It has five of the world's longest rivers, none with free access to an ocean. The Ob-Irtysh, Yenesei, and Lena flow into the Arctic. The Amur empties north into the Tatar Straits. The Volga, the longest river in Europe, flows into the Caspian Sea.

The majority of the 100,000 rivers are frozen for much of the year, causing extensive flooding in the spring. They are oriented in a north-south direction, making it difficult to use them for transport.

The world's largest lake, the Caspian Sea, and the world's deepest freshwater lake, Lake Baikal (5,315 feet deep) are in the USSR.

Mt. Communism in the Pamir Range is 24,599 feet, the highest peak in Europe. The Ural Mountains form the dividing line between Europe and Asia.

Vegetation

Permafrost (permanently frozen subsoil) covers almost half of the USSR, and in some places penetrates 7000 feet. This means that this land is unsuitable for agriculture.

The taiga is the world's largest forestland, covering more than half of the USSR. 20% of the taiga is swamp and marsh.

Deserts and semi-arid lands (not necessarily hot) make up more than 20% of the land area.

Only 10.7% of the land is suitable for farming.

Population and Resources

The population of 275,000,000 ranks third in the world. Russian people make up slightly more than half of the more than 100 different ethnic and national groups.

Nearly 2/3 of the people live in urban areas. Before the 1917 Revolution, 4/5 did.

The average number of people per square mile in the European Soviet Union is 85; the average number in the Asian Soviet Union is 16.

The USSR is virtually self-sufficient in raw materials. It has the world's largest timber reserves, and is the world leader in oil and coal porduction. Many of the raw materials are located in Siberia and are difficult to reach most of the year.

CHEEVERWOOD
by Michael Fry
YOU SEE, CHILDREN.. AMERICANS MISUNDERSTAND THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE WE'RE A PEACE-LOVING NATION!! WE MEAN THE U.S. NO HARM.. HONEST!
NOW?
NOW
4/12
SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS, IT'S ALL A BIG MISTAKE WE REALLY DO SHARE SOME OF THE SAME GOALS.. WELL THAT MAKES SENSE!
WATCH.
RICHIE! GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING! SNAP OUT OF IT, MAN!
SLAP!
SLAP!
WHA-..? WHO..? WHERE AM I?
YOU'VE BEEN HYPNOTIZED! YOU WERE BABBLING THAT THE SOVETS ARE PEOPLE, TOO!
SARCASTIC, IMPERIALIST BRATS...
WHAT?!
WHAT WOULD SLY THINK?

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

COBBLESTONE. 20 Grove Street, Peterborough, NH 03458. A history magazine for young people ages 8-14; the February 1985 issue focuses on the history of Soviet-American relations ($2.25/copy).

A DAY AT SCHOOL IN MOSCOW. Available from ESR, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. (617) 492 - 1764, for purchase only. $30.00, includes postage and handling and a study guide. Specify: 3/4", 1/2" VHS, or Beta. Produced by Eric Chivian, M.D. and Roberta Snow, M. Ed., for the International Children's Project of the Nuclear Psychology Program, Harvard Medical School, this 24 minute video provides images of a complete school day. Included are parents dropping their children off at school; a wide variety of classrooms and grade levels; and interviews with children, parents, teachers and administrators. It is a rare view of Soviets in an everyday situation. All commentary is provided by the Soviets depicted in the tape, without interpretive narration. An accompanying study guide has ideas for introducing and discussing the tape. Included are a transcript and interviews with the makers of the tape. The guide contains a resource list on Soviet education.

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PACKAGE. Grades 1-8. Ground Zero Pairing Project, P.O. Box 19049, Portland, OR 97219 ($9.95). Focuses on Soviet geography, people and culture. Includes map exercises, Russian children's stories and art, and a lesson on the Cyrillic alphabet with "jigsaw puzzle" phrases that children can use to write simple letters to children in the Soviet Union. Also available is a 60-minute audio tape on Russian fairy tales and growing up in Russia ($5.95).

FOLK ARTS OF THE SOVIET UNION. Target Seattle: Soviet Realities School Curriculum Project. Sister Margaret Evenson (620 18th Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112), Jean

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GETTING ACQUAINTED: THINKING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION
Elementary Teaching Activities for the Days of Dialogue, 1986
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Lindmark, and Marnie O'Sullivan. Still in draft form, this activities packet utilizes a folk crafts approach to appreciating Soviet culture. Includes well-researched and clear activities on nesting "grandmother" dolls, Ukrainian egg decorating, Belorussian straw designs, embroidery, weaving and more.

IMPORT PUBLICATONS. 320 W. Ohio St., Chicago, IL 60610. The most extensive source of Russian and Soviet literature in translation in the US. Their extensive catalog includes well translated and beautifully illustrated children's books.

FROM RUSSIA TO USSR. A Narrative and Documentary History. Janet G. Vaillant and John Richards II. Wellesley Hills, MA: The Independent School Press, 1985. This is a superb resource for teachers who want more background for themselves on the Soviet Union. Readable and well-organized, there are chapters on Geography, Old Russian Culture, Imperial Russia, the Revolution, the Soviet Period, and The Soviet Union Today. Included at the end of each chapter are relevant readings from other sources.

A HARVEST OF RUSSIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. Miriam Norton, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. ISBN 0-520-01745-5. ($8.95). This collection includes poetry, short stories, and excerpts from longer works.

JOURNEY TO THE SOVIET UNION. Samantha Smith. Boston and Toronto: Little Brown and Co., 1985. ($11.95). The charming first-person account by an American schoolgirl who wrote to Soviet leader Andropov and was subsequently invited to visit the Soviet Union. With page after page of colorful photographs of her trip to the Soviet Union, this readable book succeeds in humanizing the Soviet people as well as expressing the concerns that led Samantha to write to Andropov in the first place. The book is made even more poignant by Samantha Smith's untimely death.

JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC. P.O. Box 644, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071-9985. A magazine for students in grades 5-8. ($3.00/teachers, $1.25/student copies). The March 1, 1985 issue, "Inside Russia: Meet a Soviet Teenager," features articles on Soviet teenagers' lifestyle, letter writing, geography, and arms control.

LEARNING ABOUT THE SOVIETS: SELECTED TEACHING RESOURCES. ESR, 1986. Available from ESR, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. $3.50 plus $2.50 shipping & handling. A fully annotated listing including audio-visuals, articles, curricula, books, and resource organizations for learning and teaching about the Soviet Union.

PEACE CHILD and the PEACE CHILD STUDY GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS. Peace Child Foundation, 3977 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 204, Fairfax, VA 22030. The Study Guide is a ten- to twenty-lesson outline of creative activities for children ages 7-15, which accompanies the text of PEACE CHILD -- a musical play, which can be produced (with excellent original music) by school or community groups. The story is about a Russian child and an American child who meet in Washington where their parents are diplomats. They overcome initial distrust and work together to make adults aware of the need for peace. The heart of the play includes dialogues between the presidents of the two countries that show the magnitude and complexity of the problems as well as the importance of trust and friendship.

PEN PALS. School children often like to write letters to foreign counterparts in hopes of receiving a reply. The addresses for schools below are from the PEACELINKS packet on Global Awareness (available from PEACELINKS, 747 8th Street SE, Washington, DC 20003). It may seem strange to write directly to a Soviet school rather than going through an intermediary organization, but our experience has been that mail censorship combined with the language barrier often prevents successful contacts between school children in the US and the USSR. The best way to set up contact is directly, through a teacher or friend who has visited a school in the Soviet Union. Let us know if you have been successful in establishing pen pal relationships.

School #23
Ul. #28 Aprelya, 16
Baku, 370000
Azerbaijan S.S.R.
USSR

School #7
Ul. Hariduse #3
Tallin Estonian S.S.R.
USSR

PEOPLE IN IMPORTANT PLACES. 1987 Calendar. Compiled and designed by Jim Terr. Order from Blue Canyon Productions, Box 6460 Santa Fe, NM 87502. $5.00 each or three for $10.00, plus $2.50 postage and handling. An attractive one-page poster calendar with photographs of Soviet and American citizens, with the emphasis on similarities between them. Suitable for use on a classroom wall.

RUSSIA. Duplicating Masters. Cecelia Derby and Nancy Moore. Parts I and II, for grades 5-6. St. Louis: Milliken Publishing Co., 1983. ($4.95 each part). Student activity worksheets featuring geography, maps, history, puzzles. Refers to Russia instead of USSR, but portions are good supplements to other materials.

RUSSIAN FAIRY TALES. From the Collections of Aleksandr Afanas'ev. Robert Guterman, trans. New York: Random House, 1973. Another good source of folk and fairy tales to utilize in a variety of classroom activities.

THE SOVIET UNION, A CURRICULUM FOR ELEMENTARY GRADES. Julie Wheeler, Riverdale School, 11733 SW Breyman Avenue, Portland, OR 97219. ($4.00). Teacher-ready activities, from recipes to relief maps to game cards for a fact game to children's literature, this packet was prepared by a grade 3-4 teacher. These activities focus on humanizing the Soviets and presenting them in the most favorable regard. Teachers should provide other activities which bring out contrasting viewpoints.

TEACHING PACKET ON THE SOVIET UNION. Claudia Zaslavsky, 45 Fairview Avenue #13-1, New York, NY 10040. ($3.50). Focuses on how we get our information about the Soviets, and includes a good bibliography and resources section.

THINKING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION. George Perkovich and Roberta Snow. Draft curriculum. Contact ESR for information on piloting and availability. This is a comprehensive and detailed semester-long curriculum for secondary schools. Although the material is not age-appropriate for young children, there is excellent background information for elementary teachers as well as activity ideas which could be adapted for elementary use.

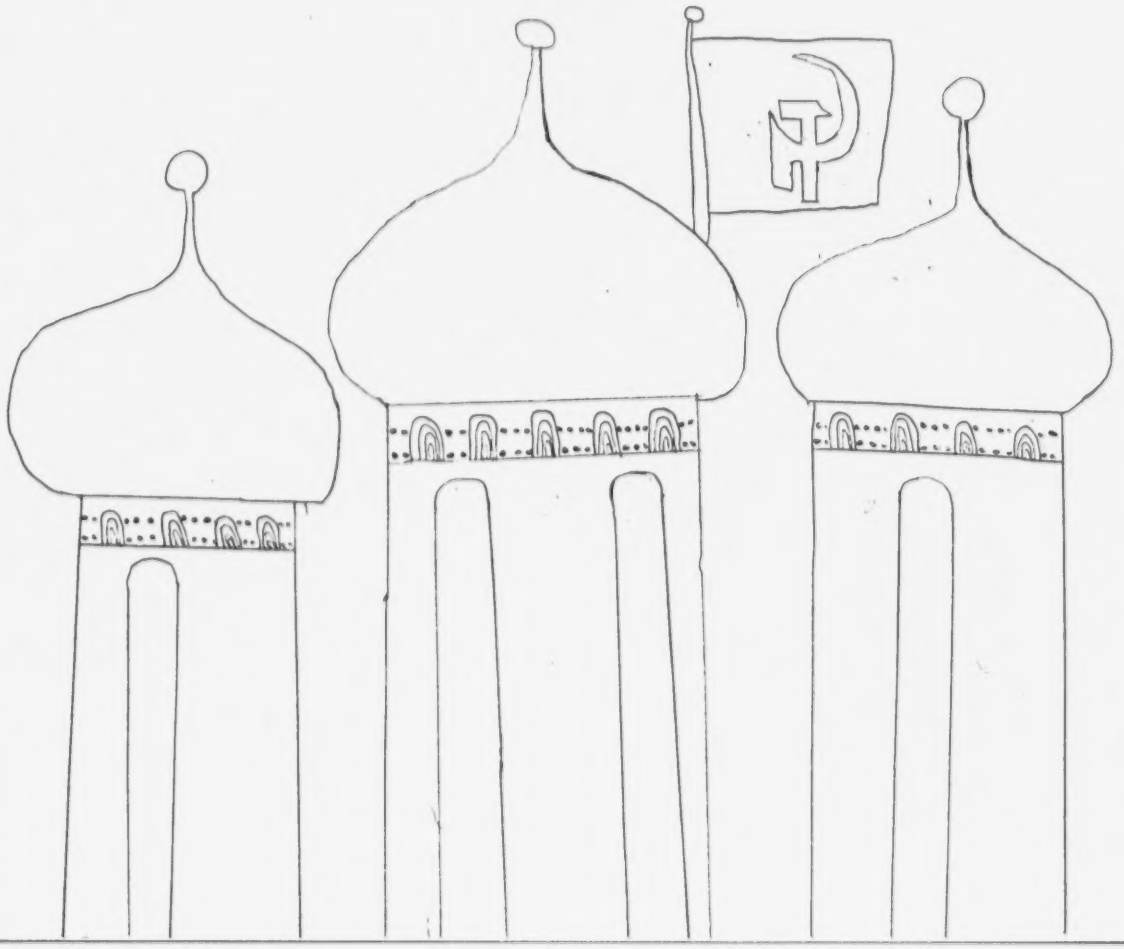
WHAT ABOUT THE RUSSIANS? Sanford Gottlieb. Published by Student/Teacher Organization to Prevent Nuclear War, Box 232, Northfield, MA 01360, 1982. ($2.50.) Concise (54 pages) and readable, this is a good resource for teachers who want background information on the history and issues of the arms race and US-Soviet relations.

A NOTE TO YOU

We have not listed recommended commercial children's books on the Soviet Union for several reasons. One reason is that there are so many of them that it is difficult to read them all, let alone to do a critical examination of them. Also, most teachers depend on their school and local libraries for supplementary books. What we would recommend might not be available in your libraries; and you might find other books in your libraries that we have not seen that are worthy of recommendation. Finally, the needs of different age and grade levels and the directions that might be followed by different teachers make it impractical for us to recommend a brief list of trade books.

RAISING QUESTIONS . . . GATHERING INFORMATION

GETTING ACQUAINTED:
THINKING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION



Caroline Mowry, age 7

A CLASS "DOODLE"

Objectives: * Introductory cooperative activity

* To stimulate thinking about the Soviet Union.

Materials: A long roll of kraft or drawing paper; crayons; felt tip markers

Some children will find it easier to express their impressions on a topic by beginning visually rather than with a discussion or writing activity. The "Brainstorm" activity will explore in greater depth children's questions and assumptions. The "Doodle" is a good way of introducing brainstorming to a group who have not done it before.

Have the class gather around the roll of paper lying on a table or floor. Tell them to draw whatever they think of when they hear the word "Russia." (At first, children will probably be more familiar with Russia than they are with the Soviet Union.) Ask them to look at and add to whatever their classmates are drawing. Some children will have difficulty thinking of things to draw; encourage them to write single words instead, or to help in the drawing that is going on around them. Don't spend longer than 15 to 20 minutes on the drawing--only long enough to generate immediate responses.

If children aren't accustomed to doing cooperative art projects, teachers might want to do a preliminary activity first on a more familiar topic -- e.g., a "Doodle" on "Our School" or a field trip the class has recently taken or another topic the children know or feel something definite about.

Before doing the Class "Doodle" on the Soviet Union, children might do one on "The U.S.A.," or "Canada," or "Our Country." In addition to giving the class some experience in this kind of activity, this could provide the teacher

with a comparison between the kind and quantity of reactions children express when given this assignment about their own country and about the Soviet Union.

Give each child the opportunity to explain his/her contribution to the "Doodle." Then they can ask questions about other children's contributions, and comment on what they see in their group production. Without analyzing the drawings, the teacher can help the class pick out what ideas or images are held in common by most students, what are pictures of things in the Soviet Union, what are symbols for the country.

BRAINSTORMING

Objectives:

* To find out what the children already know or think about the Soviets
* To provide a starting point for further research.

Materials: Large (24" x 36" or larger) sheets of newsprint; masking tape; felt markers in several colors.

Preparation

Tape several sheets of newsprint on the wall or chalkboard to write on, and have felt markers available. (Writing on paper rather than on the board allows you to save the results of your brainstorming sessions. After the lesson, you can hang the papers around the room to refer to in later activities; you can return to a topic and add new information as it arises; and eventually you can bind the pages into a "book.")

Getting Started

Explain that when a group brainstorms, certain rules apply:

1) All ideas are written down and accepted.
2) No discussion is allowed until everyone's finished.
3) Nobody's ideas are judged "right" or "wrong"
4) No one can make "put downs" of anyone else.

Choose a stimulus word or question to begin the discussion and write it clearly on the paper. Children are probably more familiar with the word "Russia" than with "Soviet Union" or "U.S.S.R.," so it is an obvious choice for younger children. In order to focus attention on the people rather than on the geography, you might use the word "Russians" and ask the questions, "Who are the Russians? What do you know about them?" (Later you can help the children understand that Russia is the name of just one of

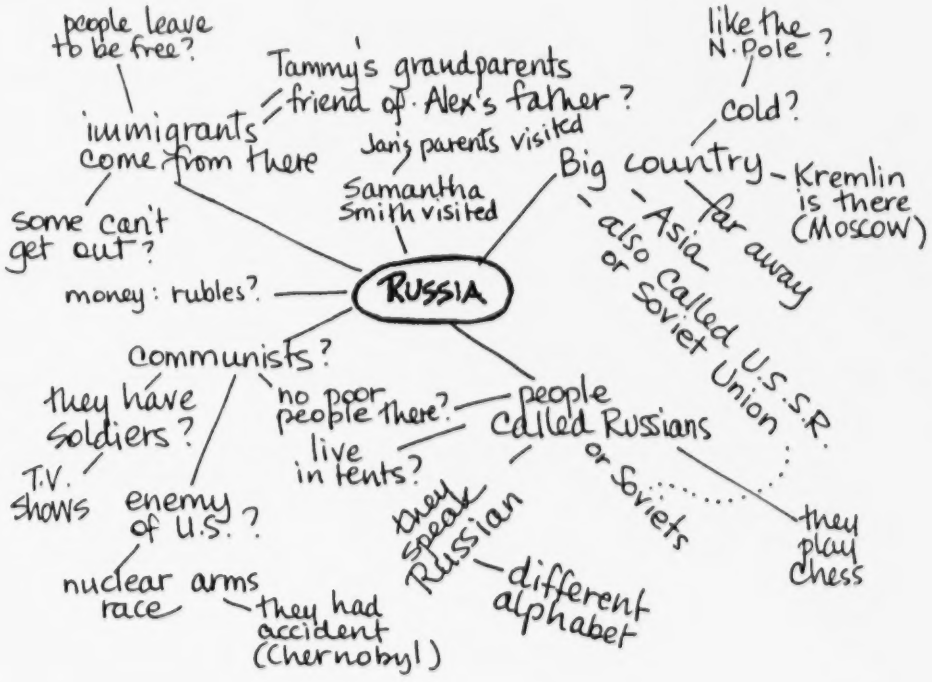
the fifteen Soviet republics, although it is often used to refer to the country as a whole, and that the people in the Soviet Union are also called the Soviets.)

Ask the children to think aloud of anything they know or think or wonder about the Russians (or Soviets). Have some students write all the responses on the sheets taped around the room.

Organizing the Information: Making a Web Chart

An effective way to record the information is by making a "web chart," loosely grouping the contributions around topics and connecting related ideas with lines.

A web chart makes it easier to visualize the information and allows you to move back and forth from one idea to another, adding more details as they come up. Even if the pages become crowded and messy, and the ideas don't cluster clearly around sub-topics, certain information is better presented in this form than when it is recorded on a vertical list. (As you construct the web chart, you are also demonstrating the skills of grouping and organizing ideas.)



In the illustration above, you may notice some incorrect information and other items followed by question marks. In this kind of brainstorming session, ideas commonly come up that are uncertain or factually false. Rather than discussing or correcting the information, it is more useful simply to record it and indicate with a question mark that this is an item the group is not sure about. This makes the point that the goal is not to come up with the "truth" or definitive answers as quickly as possible. The goal is rather to look at what we think we know, or even wonder about, and then to explore questions and different viewpoints in order to find out what we need in order to draw our own conclusions.

The younger the children, the fewer and less sophisticated will be their ideas. This is of no concern. Record whatever associations they can come up with and bring the brainstorming session to a close even if it has lasted only a couple of minutes. This is just a starting point, and looking back later at an initial web chart with only two or three items on it will demonstrate vividly how much the class has learned since the first lesson.

The Teacher's Role in Guiding the Brainstorming

Again, as in any brainstorming activity, it is important to encourage any and all ideas and not to judge either the ideas or the people who contribute them. With a topic such as this one it is especially vital to communicate to the children that their thoughts are valued, that it is good to think out loud together and to listen to all ideas, and that later there will be time to evaluate the information and draw conclusions. Even incorrect information is added to the chart, with a question mark after it to indicate that it is tentative.

At this point, the children are in control of the content. This allows them to be active rather than passive learners, experiencing themselves as the source of the ideas and questions. And because the content comes from the children, there is less likelihood of overwhelming them with facts and concepts they aren't ready for -- especially important in the study of controversial issues.

The teacher's role is to facilitate the children's thinking, and -- difficult as it may be -- to resist the temptation to provide information, corrections, and commentary. You can guide the discussion by asking such questions as, "What does that mean?", "Can you say more about that?", "Does anyone else have anything to add to that information?", and (especially for erroneous or extremely one-sided information), "Where did you learn that?" or "Is

that a fact or is it someone's opinion?" You can model tolerance of diverse ideas, as well as thoughtful consideration of information before deciding on "answers."

Facilitating and modeling in this way is sometimes difficult, but is well worth the effort. Asking the right questions to help children express their thoughts clearly, gently pushing for connections and information, and affirming their contributions are powerful ways to help children develop critical thinking skills and learn to trust their own ability to reason and reflect.

Concluding the Brainstorming Session

When the children have had the opportunity to share all of their immediate associations, thoughts, and questions about the topic of the Soviets, review briefly with them the items of information on the web chart. Look for connections that might be made, questions raised by the information, and areas they are most interested in knowing more about.

At this point it may be useful to begin separate lists of new vocabulary words, questions, and things to research further. You might want to group the information (using different colored markers to color-code the categories) into "Things We Know for Sure," "Things We Think We Know," and "Things We Aren't Sure Of." These categories can overlap with another ongoing list, "Things To Find Out More About." As the unit goes on and more ideas are added, information may move back and forth from one category to another.

In fact, it is important for children to see not only that we learn in order to move in the direction of <u>certainty</u> -- for example, from a vague notion that it is always cold in Russia to the knowledge that there are great extremes in the Soviet climate, from the cold regions within the Arctic Circle to the far south where cotton is grown; but that we learn also in order to questions our assumptions and to enlarge our concepts -- for example, that the statement, "The Russians are our enemy," can become the question, "<u>Are</u> the Russians our enemy?" or "Why do some people think the Soviet government is our enemy?". A more thoughtful awareness of both the political differences and the common interests of the Soviet Union and the U.S. thus evolves.

What Next?

This initial brainstorming lays the groundwork for how you continue with your class.

If you feel that a single brainstorming has not provided the opportunity for your class to express all their

initial ideas about the Soviets, come back to your web chart and the discussion the next day. Older elementary students especially may have many more ideas to contribute to this first brainstorming than one class period allows. The first class will also stimulate thinking. Even younger children may find that others' ideas uncover new associations for them. Do not be in too great a hurry to move on to the next step. Allow some time for the children to reflect on the information they have generated so far and let other associations come into their awareness. Simply continue the brainstorming at the point you left off in the first session, adding new items to the web chart and raising new questions and "Things To Find Out More About."

It is important for the children to realize that they are the source of all the information on the web chart at this point. Even when they move on to the next step -- gathering more information -- they are the ones who are doing the thinking. Learning is not simply a fixed body of knowledge to absorb,, but an ongoing process of looking at what we know and what we want to know more about, raising questions, seeking more information, reflecting, drawing conclusions, and continuing to look at new information.

When you feel the class has brainstormed most of what they knew and thought at the start about the Soviets and are ready to move on, go to the next activity, Asking Others.

ASKING OTHERS

Objectives: * To gather more perceptions of the Soviets from the sources nearest to the children -- their families and close friends.

* To involve parents in this unit

Included in this packet is an interview questionnaire for the children to use when asking families and friends for information. The form may be reproduced and used; or you and your class may prefer to generate your own questions and make up your own questionnaires; or the children may simply hold informal conversations and take notes on separate paper.

As a homework assignment following the initial brainstorming session, have the children interview their parents, other family members, or close friends in order to get more thoughts and information about the Soviets.

If you use the interview questionnaire included here, you will probably want to spend some class time going over it and discussing the best ways to record responses.

It is more likely, however, that your initial brainstorming session will have raised other questions that are more central to the children's interests and background knowledge at this point. You may want to prepare your own questionnaire that is more appropriate for your class, perhaps discussing and writing the questions with the children. Or, it may be sufficient simply to give the homework assignment, "Go home and find out from your parents, other family members, or friends some of the things they know and think about the Soviets," allowing the children to organize the responses however they wish. Creating interview questions and analyzing the responses can be an exceptionally rich learning opportunity from the point of view of many different skills, so you may want to expand and adapt this activity to fit into other classroom goals.

However you and your students decide to conduct the interviews and record the information, you will want to spend time the next day sharing the results. Begin a bulletin board display about the class research on the Soviets by posting the completed interview questionnaires for people to look over at their leisure. Then, in a discussion, the children can share what they found out, telling it in their own words rather than reading it from the sheets.

Telling it in their own words is very important. Too often, when young children are asked to "report" on something, they respond by laboriously copying something someone else has said and then getting up in front of the class and reading aloud what they have copied verbatim, with very little understanding of the adult language. We can let them know that we expect them to do more than this, that we trust that they can think about what they are learning and can report on it in a way that makes sense to them and to their peers.

They can translate the ideas into their own language and express their understanding in their own words. The information retained and communicated in this way may be far simpler, and even somewhat distorted to fit childish thinking, but it will be meaningful information in a way that reading without understanding cannot be.

By expecting children to communicate in their own words what they learn and know, we are teaching several lessons. First, we are demonstrating that real learning takes place only when information is processed by an active human mind, that thinking and understanding are not skills to mimic or perform by rote. Second, we are giving them the powerful message that even as children, they possess the ability to use and trust their own powers of thinking and understanding. And, by respecting the individual differences in what children find memorable or important, we are teaching that each of us masters information in our own way and draws our own conclusions. The adult responsibility of thinking critically about the information we have access to is a skill to begin developing in childhood.

As the children share the information from their interviewing assignment, you can add to the earlier web chart -- or begin a new one. You will know when it it time to start a new web on a fresh sheet of newsprint: whenever one idea is generating so many associations and details that it threatens to dominate the paper; or when more than one area of the original web chart is collecting new and related ideas which could be reorganized around a new heading; or when the children's attention focuses on one particular

subtopic. More important than the organization, however, is the fact that new and vital information is coming in and that it all gets recorded for all to see. (In fact, the more dynamic the sharing, the less orderly the web charts you create as you capture the new information on paper.)

The interviewing assignment can go on over several days, if it seems that enough new information is still coming in. And at some point in the early stages of information gathering, you will want to move on to the next activity, Writing About What We're Thinking

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Interview someone at home, like your parents, a brother or sister, a grandparent, a friend or a neighbor. Ask them these questions to find out what they think and know about the Soviet Union. Ask yourself these questions too.

Do you have any first-hand information about the Soviet Union?

What do you think about when you think about the Soviet Union?

How do the people there live?

What would you like to know about the Soviet people?

What are some reasons you can think of for our class to study about the Soviet Union?

Save this sheet!

WRITING ABOUT WHAT WE'RE THINKING

Objectives: * To organize the material students have been collecting

Give the children time to write individually about the questions, opinions and information they have generated together. Class time spent writing can vary depending on the topic and the age of the children. Assignments may include: "What I think about the Soviet Union," or "What I still would like to find out about the Soviet Union," "What questions I would ask a Soviet person."

Have each child read her/his piece aloud. This sharing allows the students to understand what are each classmate's questions and concerns. It also serves as a way for the teacher to find out what factual information about the topic students have.

Along with the questions students have asked, generate a list of questions about ideas and information which were not included in the class list. The teacher will need to evaluate the children's lists in order to do this, then can help to begin pointing out what was omitted--(e.g., "no one said anything about their weather, or what they think about us.")

After clarifying what they think they know and discussing what they would like to learn more about, students may be ready to decide how they would like to proceed with learning about the Soviet Union. The activities which follow suggest ways for students to find out answers to factual questions about the Soviet Union, as well as help them to understand that different people will have very different feelings, knowledge and levels of understanding about the Soviet Union. Inviting speakers with personal information to share is a good way of involving family or community members in the study, and also emphasizes the differences in what people think and know.

WHAT I THINK ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

Save this sheet!

What I'd Like To Find Out About The Soviet Union

Save this sheet!

QUESTIONS I WOULD ASK A SOVIET PERSON

Save this sheet!

INVITING GUESTS

Objectives:

* To get a variety of individual viewpoints on life in the Soviet Union
* To find out first-hand perspectives of Soviet life
* To inform further discussion.

To find appropriate speakers for the elementary level can be a challenging task. Younger elementary students are not interested in the intricacies of foreign relations, so speakers with personal information to share may be the most appropriate for the lower grades. Prepare the speaker by letting him/her know that the students are trying to discover together what they would like to know about the Soviet Union, and have generated lists of questions through discussion, interviewing and writing. A speaker who is willing to address the children's questions in a non-judgmental way is probably the best choice for your classroom.

Before the speaker comes, tell the class about her/his background. By this time, you will have all spent a good deal of time sharing feelings and ideas with each other. Understanding that each person has opinions that should be respected is one lesson to be learned from this unit; tell the class that the person who will be speaking has information, opinions, and feelings that s/he will share. The person may talk about ideas that the class will want to discuss more after the speaker has gone, but while the speaker is visiting, listening well and trying to understand his/her point of view is important. Emphasize that any visitor will only be able to give a very small picture of life in the Soviet Union.

Before the talk, let the speaker know the children's interests, attention span, and some of the specifics about your class that would help them make an interesting

presentation. If the speaker has first hand knowledge of the USSR, encourage respect for the children's viewpoints and openness. S/he must be aware that the purpose for being there is not to "win over" the class to a particular point of view, but to impart a sense of how life was lived in the USSR.

Some of the questions that the children have asked in the interview might be good ones to lead off the speaker's talk. Has the visitor learned about the Soviet Union first-hand? What about the Soviets is the speaker especially able to share? Why does s/he think children should study about the Soviet Union?

Other questions for the speaker to consider will come from the writing assignments. Questions students asked when they wrote on "What I would like to ask a Soviet person" or "What I would still like to find out about the Soviet Union" are excellent starting points. The person you invite will appreciate it if you are able to tell her/him in advance what the class's interests are.

Keep the talk short so that children don't get bored -- and give plenty of time for questions! If a speaker can involve the class during the sharing, all to the good. Ways to do might this include songs, art activities, dancing, reading aloud.

Some Suggestions About Speakers

A nearby college or university with a Russian/Soviet Studies department may have faculty members able to talk to young audiences about a part of Soviet life that will especially interest them (e.g, language, music, family life, schools, geography, traditional crafts, folk tales, sports.) Some Soviet studies departments have lending libraries of films, slides, and other informative resources.

Some universities arrange trips to the USSR for students and faculty. Someone who has spent a semester in the country or who has visited could show slides, home videotapes or movies, and souvenirs. Even brief impressions, while not comprehensive or definitive, can provide valuable information and insight.

Colleges with music, art, and dance departments are excellent sources of people to lead activities. Students or faculty are often able to teach a wide variety of folk songs, to play musical instruments, to lead dances, or to demonstrate crafts of many different cultures.

A school or public librarian/audio-visual specialist could share books, records, or a-v's from or about the Soviet Union. Children's books from the Soviet Union would be a good topic, especially if someone who could translate were able to read them aloud. In some city's Yellow Pages, translators and foreign language instructors are listed; one might be willing to spend time reading Russian stories and talking about the language.

Relatives of a student may have emigrated from the Soviet Union. Including the perspective of someone who has left the Soviet Union can be enlightening; but the speaker should be aware of the age and limitations of the audience. Older elementary students will probably already have brought up questions about the Soviet Union having to do with individual freedom, why our countries are "enemies," why people spy for the USSR, whether we have ever fought against each other in a war. If someone can talk about these questions and what living in the USSR was like, without overwhelming young children.

If you have access to people who adhere to the Soviet system, such as embassy or consulate cultural attaches, these people would also be an interesting source of first-hand information. However, the considerations used when inviting an emigre apply equally here. The purpose for inviting a Soviet to an elementary classroom is not to hear a formal lecture on politics and international relations, but to obtain personal information of Soviet life. Someone could talk about Soviet schools, after-school activities of children, making career choices, or cultural topics like the ballet or the circus. A Soviet might give accurate insight on the varied peoples that live in the country and on the immensity of the land.

If you are not able to get a speaker who has lived in or been to the USSR, you might want to show "A Day At School in Moscow" and use its accompanying guide. The videotape was produced by two Americans, Eric Chivian and Roberta Snow, who have spent several years talking with American and Soviet schoolchildren about their interests and concerns. Information on how to obtain the tape is in the bibliography accompanying this packet. The tape begins with children's arrival at school and follows them throughout an entire day of classes and activities and home. The only people who talk on the tape are Soviets --teachers, students, parents-- so the tape is one way of getting a Soviet viewpoint on a subject with which children are very familiar. Children from the third grade up would probably enjoy looking at parts of the tape and talking about how their lives seem similar and different from those of the Soviet children shown.

The purpose of these activities is to promote questions and curiosity about the Soviet Union, not to espouse any particular opinions. You should feel that time spent with a speaker was informative and that you now understand one more aspect of Soviet life more fully.

If you have a camera, take pictures of the speaker with the class, especially if s/he has involved them in some kind of activity or brought interesting items to show. Put the pictures up with the webs, questions, and interviews you are already displaying.

After your guest leaves, have the class evaluate what they heard. The evaluation can be done in a group, or students can write on the experience. Questions to ask each other include:

* What was most enjoyable or interesting?

* What did you learn that you had not known before?

* Did you hear something you would like to know more about?

* What didn't you understand?

* If you participated in cultural activities or saw slides or movies of the Soviet Union, what did you see or do that was different from what you expected?

* Can they summarize in their own words what the guest had to offer? Careful listening should be encouraged. Being able to summarize shows that they understood what they heard.

Have your students write to the guest to thank him or her for participating in the class and tell what impressed them most about the visit.

DIGGING DEEPER

Objectives:

* To distinguish perceptions about the USSR from facts
* To explore a variety of sources of information
* To sharpen research skills

If you invited in a guest, your class probably began to obtain first-hand facts. By now, students have discovered that a wide range of ideas, opinions, stereotypes, and perceptions surround the Soviet Union and its people. Separating fact from opinion is an important distinction for older elementary students to be able to make. To say "The Soviet Union is the largest country in the world" is significantly different from saying "The Soviet Union is the best/worst country in the world." As students look at different sources of supposedly factual information about the Soviet Union, have them continue to question themselves about what the author thinks of the Soviet Union. Help them to have an understanding that just as speakers give information in a subjective way, so do writers, mapmakers, photographers, cartoonists, etc.

Most of the activities described below have supplementary material contained in the section of this packet called **More to Explore.**

Talk with the class about where they think they can find out more information on the Soviet Union. Some of the possible sources will be maps, books, newspapers and magazines, television, the Soviets themselves.

Maps & Globes

Start with a regular classroom map or globe. Students can observe some important things about the USSR by looking at its geography.

Have students find the USSR on a globe or world map. Consider these questions:

* What is the country we've been calling Russia or the Soviet Union called on the map?

* What other countries and oceans surround the Soviet Union?

* How big is the Soviet Union? How many miles wide?

* What state of the United States is close to the Soviet Union?

* What are some big cities in Russia?

* How can we find out more about the land in the Soviet Union?

If your map is not a detailed one, look at an atlas that shows the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union. This is a good time to explain that the reason we have been trying to call the country the Soviet Union or the USSR is that the Soviet Union is more than Russia, which is only one of the republics. Each republic has its own government, like the states in the US, which send representatives to the main government in Moscow. The republics vary greatly in geography, culture, music and language.

Vocabulary Study

During your brainstorming you probably made a list of new or unfamiliar words for further investigation. Possible words that will appear in a class web on Russia might be: communism, rubles, Gorbachev, Iron Curtain, Kremlin, dissident, Tsar. Maps may have words that are strange, like tundra, steppes, taiga.

Break the class up in groups of two or three. Have each group take one or two of the mystery words and find out what it means by looking it up in a dictionary, almanac or encyclopedia. Have them write together on a mystery word sheet in their own words what it means and share it with the class. Hang the sheets on the walls. Over the course of study have students find pictures, stories, or news items that contain the words and put them with the pictures. Go around a circle and have students use one of the words to ask a question about something they could learn more about, (e.g. "How many rubles are in a dollar?", "Why do some dissidents leave the USSR?").

Reporting the News: Using Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Television Shows

Students probably will spontaneously begin to bring in news items or magazine articles about the Soviet Union. If not, once children have shared their initial perceptions of the Soviets, encourage them to look and listen around them for the topics that you have been discusssing to come up on the nightly news, to appear in comic strips, or to be in television shows that they like to watch.

Just as journalists keep notebooks of questions and stories that they find interesting and would like to cover, have your class keep a notebook during the week of the times outside of the classroom that they hear or see anything relating to the Soviet Union, to your vocabulary words, to the questions that they have. They can cut pictures and articles out, but comprehension of the information is what is important.

Summarizing an article in a few sentences in their "reporter's notebooks" should be emphasized; or describing a television program or news story in their own words. The pictures and information collected can be added to your room display, but the students' reportage on events, reviews of television or movies, should be based on what they have actually understood from reading and observing. Have the students think about their information sources and ask analyzing questions about them:

* What does the person say about the Soviet Union?
* What kinds of words or pictures does he/she use?
* Why do you think s/he decided to tell people in the US about the Soviet Union in this way?
* Does this person have a direct source of information from the Soviet Union?
* Are they stating an opinion about the USSR?
* Does the person want to convince you that something is true (or right or wrong, etc.) or to simply give you some information?
* How do feel about the Soviet Union after reading (hearing, seeing) what you did?
* Did you change the way you were thinking?

* Was there anything that you didn't understand?

* Do you agree or disagree with what the source says? Why?

Once students start asking critical questions about sources of information, they begin to understand that almost all news stories, books, movies, magazine articles have a particular point of view and case to make. By thinking critically about what they read and hear and see, students become capable of making judgments about the meaning of a source. They can decide whether a viewpoint is convincing, or if it does not make sense to them. They begin to clarify their own perspectivs and to learn that viewpoints can be modified by new information or can be starting points for further learning. Children will begin to see that critically understanding an issue or controversial topic can help to pinpoint problems and thus lead to solutions. When assumptions and viewpoints are not questioned, the problems underlying them are not stated or understood, therefore it is impossible to begin to work to solve them.

The notebooks and the analysis can become the basis of a class "News Report" in which each student shares the information or idea that most intrigues him or her about the Soviet Union. Brainstorm ideas about what is usually included in a newspaper or news show. Then decide what to include in the class "Special Report on the Soviet Union." You may want to print a newspaper or to conduct a mock television broadcast. Students might pretend to be Soviets that are being interviewed about their daily lives. Some "correspondents" could report on current events. American and Soviet leaders meeting could be acted out. An introduction to Soviet history, human interest stories, the weather, cultural reviews, editorials, opinion polls, all could be included. The teacher may wish to act as "News Anchor" to tie together the reports. After the newscast, ask students to talk about themselves as sources. What did they want the audience most to know about the Soviet Union? What do they think it is important for people to learn about the Soviet Union? Why? Have them scrutinize their own reports as carefully as they do others'.

Soviet Sources

Writing as a class to the Soviet Embassy in Washington is a good way to get materials about the Soviet Union. Make sure the Embassy knows the age of the children so that they can send appropriate resources. The class can compose a letter together, including some of the questions they have generated from brainstorming and hearing speakers. This is a way to introduce to children the forms for writing letters

to public and governmental agencies. You will not receive an immediate reply, but when the information does arrive from the Embassy, it will be an opportunity to review the thinking the class did together about the Soviet Union.

Write to: Information Officer
Embassy of the USSR
1706 18th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009.

Have students read the materials they received and examine them by asking the same questions they used in the previous activity.

* What is different about some Soviet viewpoints?

* What more do you need to know about the Soviet Union to understand the information?

QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION: A CLASS PROJECT

Objectives:

* To give students a sense that their ideas, questions, thoughts, and new information are important and will be heard
* To help them to share what they are finding out with family and others;
* To participate in an important national project

The children have asked themselves many questions, considered many viewpoints, and learned some new facts about the Soviet Union. Because it would take weeks to do a thorough study of the Soviet Union, and not many school curricula spend that much time on the country, this packet has concentrated on finding out what we think, what we think we know, what we would like to know more about, and finding out what Soviets say about themselves. One way to help students understand that they still have much to learn is to make a class yearbook and to share some of the work with ESR for the National Yearbook Project.

Ask the students to look again at the webs you made together, the photos taken of your guest(s), the map, research or cultural projects you may have done, the sheets of questions, the interview answers -- all the materials you have generated in the course of study. Ask them to take the ideas which interest them the most and express them by doing a drawing, making a web, listing questions, writing a paragraph, story or poem or song, making a collage. Ask each child to tell one thing learned that s/he did not know before. Ask each child to name one thing to find out more about.

When the projects are completed, ask the children to tell in a few minutes what their project is about. Together discuss what ideas they might have for the title of a yearbook project. One possibility is to make a calendar for

the upcoming year. If your class is interested in making a calendar, you will find information on Soviet calendars in the third section of this packet. A class that enjoyed keeping notebooks on media and books might like to publish a newsletter to share with other classes. One school had children bind their projects into books and sent them to a school in Moscow with a teacher who was visiting. Or you may choose to keep your book in the classroom, to go back to when you have time to think about the Soviet Union again, as when you hear from the Embassy. Some classes photocopy the work to share with all the children and their families.

ESR encourages you to submit work from your class to be included in our National Yearbook: **Questions and Thoughts About the Soviet Union . . . From Kids.** Please read more about the reasons we would like for you to participate in the introduction to this packet. If you decide to contribute to the National Yearbook, choose works you feel are most representative of your class's ideas, concerns, and questions. If possible, please send black and white work, or work which will reproduce well in black and white.

Send the original work unfolded to:

Northern New Mexico/ESR
c/o Dana Newman
1807 Otowi Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Be certain that you include the children's names, grades and ages with the work, and that your name, grade taught, and school address are noted on a separate paper. The work becomes the property of National ESR and cannot be returned.

Explain to children who wish to contribute that their works may be included in a book of such pieces collected from children all around the US and Canada. The book will be used to help teachers and parents understand what children want to find out about the Soviet Union and its people. Participating schools and teachers will receive a copy of the Yearbook when it is published in 1987 and ESR hopes to make the book available in some form for the general public to use.

MORE TO EXPLORE . . .

GETTING ACQUAINTED:
THINKING ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

Baba Yaga – The worst witch in all Russia. lives in a queer kind of a hut that stands on chicken legs and turns. She travels in a mortar and rows through the air with her pestle.

AARON TURNER, age 8

HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Objective: * To introduce some historical information for students

The information in this section provides background for the teacher. Your students will probably want some kind of historical setting for their questions about and examinations of the Soviet Union. Historical texts are one source of information about the history of Russia and the Soviet Union after the Revolution in 1917. Another way for students to gain a better understanding is to look at the holidays that the Communist government has chosen to emphasize.

Because the Soviets have strict separation of religion and the State, holidays that have religious meaning are not celebrated nationally. Most holidays commemorate occasions in Communist history or promote ideals valued by the Communist party. Only a few public holidays have roots in pre-revolutionary celebrations.

The Soviet Union is still a new country. It was formed after a revolution by the Communists in 1917 that overturned the government ruled by the Tsar, who ruled as a king. The Tsar also ruled the church and most of the people belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church. After the revolution, the Communists decided that the church and government should be completely separate. Religious holidays are only observed privately now.

Some older people still remember the revolution, and the most important national holiday is the Anniversary of the October Revolution. This holiday takes place now on November 7th and 8th, because until 1918, the Russians used an older calendar called the "Julian calendar." After the revolution, the calendar in use by Europe and the United States was adopted in the USSR. Two days off include parades of soldiers and weapons. Children and adults march in the parades also to tell others their accomplishments in school and at work for the past year. After the public

celebrations are over, families go to fireworks displays and to hear concerts and artillery salutes, as we do on Independence Day.

Another important holiday is May Day (May 1). On this day, workers in the USSR celebrate their importance to the well-being of their country. As on Labor Day in the United States, workers take the day off to march in parades, spend time with their families, go to picnics and parties and to watch fireworks. We think of Labor Day as ending the summer; the Soviets mark the beginning of summer with May Day.

Vladimir Ilich Lenin, (1870 - 1924) was the head of the Communist Party that led the revolution against the Tsar. The Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks (the Majority and the Minority) were political parties that both worked within the Communist government. The Bolsheviks eventually took over the entire Communist party, and this is the now the only political party in the USSR. Lenin was a Bolshevik, and he later became the first head of the new Soviet government. He is considered the most important leader that the Soviet Union has had in its short history. His picture hangs in all schools and public buildings, and school children hear about his life in the way that American children learn about George Washington. His birthday and the day he died are both commemorated. On Lenin's birthday (April 22), workers must contribute the money they make on that day to the government to be used to pay for schools, hospitals, and welfare funds. A number of days like this are observed throughout the year.

New Year's Day is celebrated in much the same way as Americans celebrate Christmas. Families buy trees and decorate them; exchange gifts; and cook special meals. Children have two weeks off from school. Presents are brought to children on New Year's Day by "Grandfather Frost" and his helper "The Snow Maiden." The Communist government has promoted the celebration of New Year's in order to discourage the Christmas holiday that was celebrated before the Revolution.

Soviets celebrate Women's Day on March 8. Presents, cards, and flowers are given to female teachers, co-workers, and classmates by men and boys. Awards are given on this day to mothers who have had many children. During World War II, as many as 25 million Soviets died. People remember the losses of the war vividly. The government encourages people to have large families to make up for the deaths that took place. Soviet Army-Navy Day, on February 23, is a day to remember World War II and the men and boys who fought and died. It is like both Father's Day and Veteran's Day.

September 1 is the first day of school in the Soviet Union. Students entering the first grade attend the first day of school with their parents. Around October 1, Teachers' Day is celebrated by bringing flowers to the teacher. Before the Revolution many people did not learn to read and write. The Communists made centralized schools a priority for all. The literacy rate in the Soviet Union is one of the highest in the world. Students learn a wide variety of academic subjects and are also indoctrinated from a very early age in important principles of Communism.

"FIND THE FIFTEEN" PUZZLE

Objective: * To motivate children in map and geographical study of the Soviet Union

The puzzle shows an outline of the Soviet Union. All fifteen names of the soviet republics are contained within the puzzle. Have the class read the names over and locate the republics on a map of the Soviet Union before they find the names in the puzzle. Some students might be interested in learning how the republics contribute to governing the Soviet Union, how they were established, what different languages are spoken in each republic, what different cultures exist in the republics.

FIND THE FIFTEEN

V
S I
B L X
O A J I
J Q W T N X
L R P T B V F I
V N E R S I Z
J D L
I Q T B E L O R U S S I A I P
L I
T F F
Y Q L X Z J
L T U R K M E N I A L F P B L X A R D G H K T P C Q L
B R H V M Z P C D J X O C M I T V A N Q C X O D I
I G E O R G I A K I D E O P Q T D Z R X Y R L N V T
Z U N O B X V A Y J B V X T H N E M D L U P I Z
J K I R G H I Z I A K R B G U Z B E K I S T A N X V L
R Z D T F L A O X E B D K A J R N V Z S I A T L Y D
A T A D J I K I S T A N H N K M I G O I U V Q X R
I B X G Q Z H J B E C F J I N D A L P A T J
N H E T L V S Y A Z E R B A I J A N S L I
E X Y P Z I T X Q R T M Z F
D M O L D A V I A D P
R C E N T L J F
A R V M B Z
T C L

THE REPUBLICS OF THE SOVIET UNION

FIND THE NAMES OF THE 15 SOVIET REPUBLICS IN THE WORD SEARCH PUZZLE MAP ABOVE:

ESTONIA	THE UKRAINE	KAZAKHSTAN
LATVIA	MOLDAVIA	UZBEKISTAN
LITHUANIA	GEORGIA	TURKMENIA
RUSSIA	AZERBAIJAN	KIRGHIZIA
BELORUSSIA	ARMENIA	TADJIKISTAN

THE CYRILLIC ALPHABET AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Objective: * To introduce students to one major difference between themselves and the Soviets: the language

The Cyrillic alphabet is the name of the alphabet that the Russian language uses. It is named after St. Cyril, who was a Greek who traveled into what is now the Soviet Union to convert the people there to Christianity. He adapted the Greek alphabet to the language he heard the people speaking. The alphabet was finished in the year 861. Many of the letters look and sound like letters in the Greek alphabet.

Practice with your class reading the letters of the alphabet from the provided sheets. One of the first things young students often try to do with a new alphabet is to write their own names. Your class will probably want to do this. They can also play "The Name Game", trying to pronounce the names on the page in Russian and to find the English matches. This is a good activity for children to do in groups of two or three, saying the names to each other and trying to decide which names go together. It may not work as well with the entire class, because some students will more quickly become adept at reading letters and may not give others the time to sound them out to themselves.

Some of your students may have names in a language other than English. They will have the experience already of finding out what their own names sound like in English. If you have students with such names, have them talk about what their names are in their own language and what they are in English.

The cognates are actual Russian words that sound like English words when they are pronounced. Using their alphabet sheets as guides, have students try to analyze the Russian words and figure out what they are in English. Children who have difficulty with phonetic reading may find this extremely frustrating, so you may want to save it as

extra material for those who are especially interested in the language. The same is true of the map, which has place names in Russian.

THE CYRILLIC ALPHABET

Letter		Pronunciation		Letter		Pronunciation	
А	а*	ah	father	Р	р**	r	(somewhat rolled)
Б	б	b	book	С	с**	s	speak
В	в**	v	vote	Т	т*	t	too
Г	г	g	good	У	у	oo	fool
Д	д	d	day	Ф	ф	f	fire
Е	е**	eh	yet	Х	х**	h/hk	loch'
Ё	ё	yoh	yonder	Ц	ц	ts	quartz
Ж	ж	zh	pleasure	Ч	ч	ch	chair
З	з	z	zone	Ш	ш	sh	short
И	и	ee	meet	Щ	щ	shch	fresh cheese'
Й	й	y	boy	Ъ	ъ	hard sign [no sound]	
К	к*	k	kind	Ь	ь	soft sign [no sound]	
Л	л	l	full'	Ы	ы	ee/ih'	
М	м*	m	man	Э	э	eh	men
Н	н**	n	note	Я	я	yah	yard
О	о*	oh	pot	Ю	ю	u	university
П	п	p	pen				

*Looks like, sounds like English

**Looks like, sounds different from English

'closest English sound

Cyrillic Cognates

Some words sound almost the same in Russian and English. Refer to the Cyrillic Alphabet sheet to write these Russian words in English.

Example: АКТ ____act____

ПАРК _____

МАТЧ _____

БАНК _____

СТАРТ _____

СТОП _____

МЕНЮ _____

КЛАСС _____

РЕКОРД _____

ДОЛЛАР _____

ДОКТОР _____

РЕСТОРАН _____

ТЕЛЕФОН _____

ФОТБАЛ _____

БАСКЕТБАЛ _____

ПЕПСИ-КОЛА _____

More Cyrillic Cognates

These Russian words are harder to find. Good Luck!

РАДИО_____

СТУДЕНТ_____

ПИКНИК_____

БАНАН_____

ЛИМОНАД_____

БАЛЕРИНА_____

ПАСПОРТ_____

МИКРОФОН_____

ТЕЛЕСКОП_____

ДИПЛОМАТ_____

ПРОГРЕСС_____

ТУРИСТ_____

ВОЛЕЙБОЛ_____

ДЖАЗ_____

ВИТАМИН_____

UNION OF THE SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

The following names appear on the map in Russian. Most of them sound the same or almost the same in English as they do in Russian. Try to read the names in Russian and fill in the English word below it.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

NORWAY

SWEDEN

FINLAND

POLAND

LENINGRAD

MOSCOW

GORKY

ODESSA

NOVOSIBIRSK

TASHKENT

IRAN

AFGHANISTAN

PAKISTAN

INDIA

NEPAL

PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF CHINA
(The Russian words do not sound like this!)

JAPAN

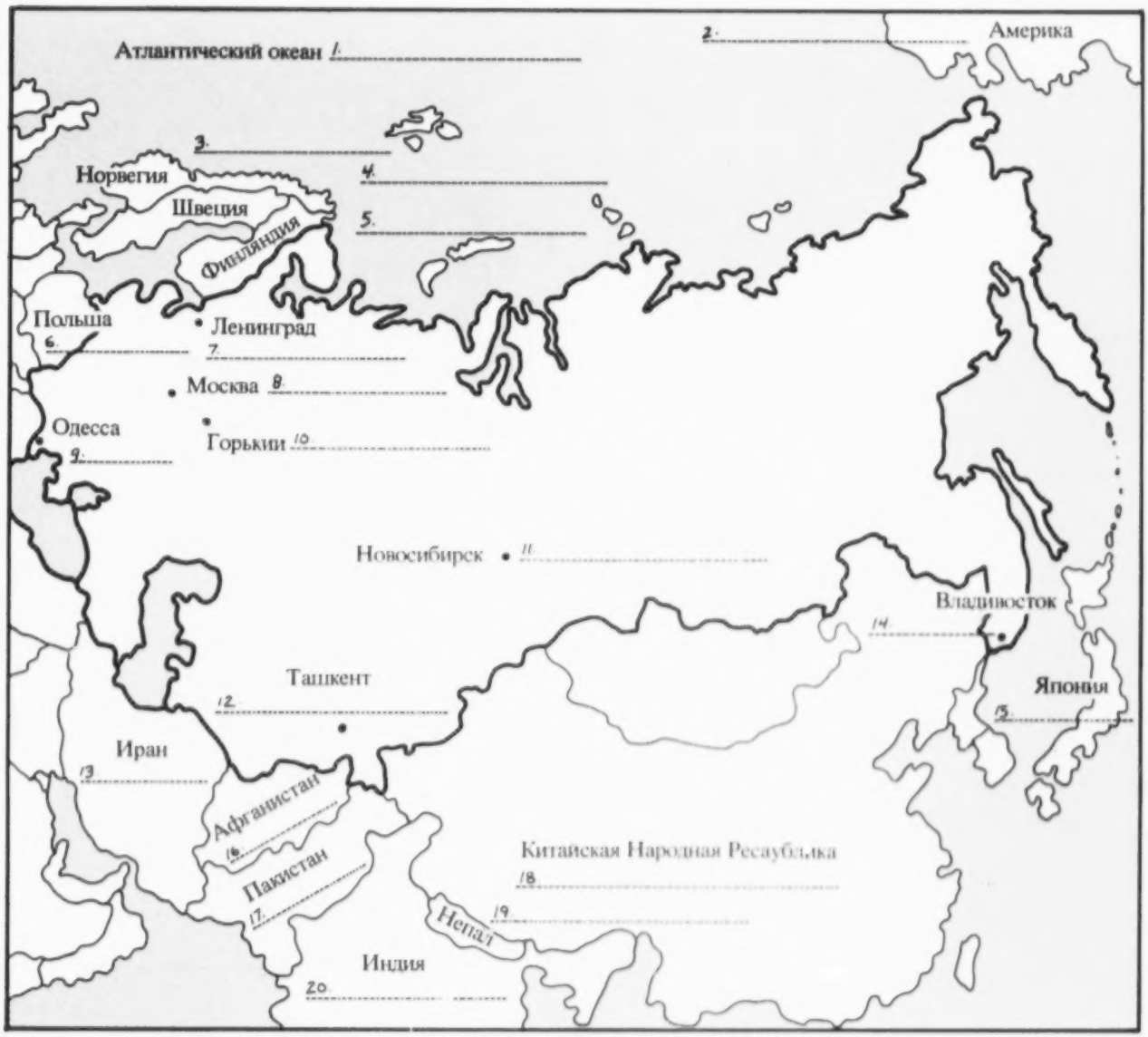
VLADIVOSTOK

AMERICA

SOVIET UNION
(The Russian word for union is "Soyuz")

UNION OF THE SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Советский Союз



THE NAME GAME

Russian names, like English ones, often have nicknames that go with them. Some of the nicknames for the names are given after the whole names. Russian names have a first, middle and last name, but Russians call each other by their first name and by the middle name, a "patronymic." This name has the name of the person's father in it. A man named Yuri whose father was named Ivan would be called Yuri Ivanovich. A woman named Elizaveta whose father was named Ivan would be called Elizaveta Ivanovna. Men add "--ovich" ("son of") and women add "--ovna" "daughter of" to the patronymic. Have children decide what they would be called if they visited the Soviet Union.

Boys

Alexander, Alexei, Sacha
Andrei, Andruschka -- Andrew, Andy
Anton -- Anthony, Tony
Boris, Borya
Dmitri
Yevgeni -- Eugene
Fyodor -- Theodore
Georgi -- George
Grigori -- Gregory
Igor
Ivan -- John
Karl -- Carl, Karl
Lavrenti -- Laurence, Larry
Leonid -- Leonard
Mikhail -- Michael
Nikolai -- Nicholas
Pavel, Pasha -- Paul
Stepan, Stivka -- Stephen, Steve
Viktor
Vladimir, Volodya

Girls

Alexandra, Sacha
Anastasia
Darya
Diana, Dina -- Diana, Diane
Ekaterina -- Catherine
Elizaveta -- Elizabeth
Helena, Lena -- Helen
Irena, Ira -- Irene
Larisa, Lara -- Laura
Liubov, Luba
Marina, Marya -- Mary
Natasha
Olga
Svetlana, Sveta
Tamara -- Tammy
Tatiana, Tanya
Yelena
Zhana

THE NAME GAME

Many Russian names sound like English names. Many do not! There are more Russian names on this page than there are English names. Some of the Russian names on this page are like English names and some are not. Can you say the names and figure out which English names they are like? Which ones don't have matches? Write the English name under the Russian name. Try to write what the name would be for the ones that don't have matches.

Russian	English
Степан	Andrew
Екатерина	Anna
Ирина	Catherine
Николай	Diana
Лара	Elizabeth
Иван	George
Галина	Irene
Михаил	Laura
Дмитрий	Michael
Диана	Nicholas
Павел	Paul
Елизавета	Stephen
Андрей	
Татьяна	
Георгий	
Владимир	
Любовь	
Игорь	

FAST FACTS... ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

Objectives:

* To compare general information about the USSR and the US
* To provide quick references for general facts that are located in diverse sources
* To listen carefully and summarize what is heard in writing

"Fast Facts" can be played with twenty children. The cards are well snuffled and each child gets one of the cards. Each card has a question on it and the answer to a question on another card. Each child gets a card and a survey sheet. The game is played by having one child go first, reading the question on his/her card. All the children read the answers on their cards to themselves and the child with the answer reads it aloud for the whole class. Everyone writes the answer in the appropriate place on the survey sheet. S/he then reads the question on her/his own card and the next person answers, while students try to listen well and write down what they hear. Students should do this quickly, as that is part of the fun of the game. This is a way to get some factual information on the Soviet Union to compare to what students may already know about their own country. If students are assigned the task of listening to news reports and summarizing stories in a "reporter's notebook" this is good practice for listening well to information and trying to get it as concisely as possible. After all twenty questions have been read and answered, go over the information together and make sure that everyone understood the answers correctly. Spell any words that students did not understand and look on a map for geographical features in both countries.

FAST FACTS... ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

	United States of America	Soviet Union
Continent		
Capital		
Divisions		
Language		
Currency		
Population		
Number of Time Zones		
Important Rivers		
Mountain Ranges		
Sq. Miles of Area		

FAST FACTS . . . ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

	United States of America	Soviet Union
Continent	North America	Europe & Asia, sometimes called Eurasia
Capital	Washington, DC	Moscow
Divisions	50 states	15 republics
Language	English	Russian
Currency	Dollars & Cents	Rubles & Kopecks
Population	234 million	273 million
Number of Time Zones	four, not including Alaska & Hawaii	eleven
Important Rivers	Missouri, Columbia Mississippi Rivers	Amur, Volga, Ural, Dnieper Rivers
Mountain Ranges	Appalachian Mountains Rocky Mountains	Ural Mountains Caucasus Mountains
Sq. Miles of Area	3,620,000 s. miles	8,650,000 sq. miles

The Soviet Union contains the Ural Mountains and the Caucasus Mountains. ********** On what continent is the United States?	The Amur, Volga, Ural, and Dnieper Rivers are important in the Soviet Union. ********** What is the most widely spoken language in the United States?
273,000,000 people live in the Soviet Union. ********** The Soviet Union is located on what continents?	234,000,000 people live in the United States. ********** What is the area of the Soviet Union?
Rubles and kopecks are the Soviet currency. 100 kopecks equals one ruble. ********** What language is most widely spoken in the Soviet Union?	The Soviet Union is in Europe and Asia, sometimes called Eurasia. ********** How many time zones are there in the United States?
There are fifty states in the United States. ********** What is the capital of the Soviet Union?	There are fifteen republics in the Soviet Union. ********** What are the major rivers of the United States?

The currency of the United States is dollars and cents. 100 cents equals 1 dollar. ********** What is the capital of the United States?	North America is the continent that contains the United States. ********** What is the currency of the Soviet Union?
Washington, DC is the capital of the United States. ********** How many time zones are there in the Soviet Union?	English is the main language spoken in the United States. ********** How is the Soviet Union divided?
The area of the United States is 3,620,000 square miles. ********** What are the names of several important rivers in the Soviet Union?	The Appalachian Mountains and the Rocky Mountains are in the United States. ********** What are the names of some mountain ranges in the Soviet Union?
There are 11 times zones in the Soviet Union. ********** What is the population of the Soviet Union?	The capital of the Soviet Union is Moscow. ********** What is the currency of the United States?

The area of the Soviet Union is 8,650,000 square miles. It is 2 1/2 times the size of the United States.

****

What are the names of some mountain ranges in the the United States?

The Missouri River, the Mississippi River, and the Columbia River are important rivers in the United States.

****

What is the population of the United States?

The Russian language is the official language of the Soviet Union, but many other languages are spoken there.

****

What are the divisions of the United States?

There are four time zones in the United States, not including Alaska and Hawaii, which each have their own time zones.

****

What is the area of the United States in square miles?

A CHILDREN'S CRAFT

Objectives: * To provide insight into a way Soviet children amuse themselve

"Vitsinanka" is the Russian word for the craft of papercutting. Before cameras existed to document important occasions, farmers' families would cut out folded paper pictures to celebrate weddings or holidays. Long winter nights were spent using the tips of heavy sheep shearing scissors to cut out paper pictures of snow flakes, farm animals, or flowers. The designs were then pasted onto the walls of farmhouses to relieve the darkness of the winter. When spring arrived, the walls were freshly painted and new vitsinanka were made to celebrate the coming of the new season. People in the USSR continue to make these paper designs with their children.

Different regions have unique styles of papercutting. Various styles include color silhouettes, symmetrical designs, long horizontal bands of people, trees or animals, and multi-colored layered designs.

To make a symmetrical design:

1) Fold a sheet of paper exactly in half. Draw a design, the center of which goes down the fold.

2) Cut through both layers of paper.

3) Open the paper, and glue the cut design to another sheet of paper of a different color.

Symmetrical designs can be made very elaborately with older children or very simply with younger ones. Paper can be folded and unfolded several times while cutting, or shaped into curves, which is especially attractive when making snowflakes.

To make a multi-colored layered paper picture:

1) On a plain colored sheet of paper, draw a large outline of an animal (roosters are popular in the Soviet Union as are other animals) or person. You might like to pick a character from one of the songs or stories you may have heard. Within the outline, include other shapes, like a beak, feet and feathers for a bird; clothing and facial features for a person.

2) Trace the shapes onto a plain white sheet of paper.

3) Put the tracing over different colored sheets of paper and slip a piece of carbon paper in between. Re-draw the shapes on the white paper. This will transfer a line onto the contrasting sheets.

4) Cut out the shapes and then glue them where they belong on the original drawing. Then cut the entire figure out and hang it on a white wall, or paste it to a sheet of contrasting color.

A Soviet Calendar For 1986

	ЯНВАРЬ	ФЕВРАЛЬ	МАРТ	АПРЕЛЬ	
П	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	П
В	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	В
С	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	С
Ч	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	Ч
П	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	П
С	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	С
В	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	В

	МАЙ	ИЮНЬ	ИЮЛЬ	АВГУСТ	
П	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	П
В	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	В
С	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	С
Ч	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	Ч
П	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	П
С	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	С
В	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31	В

	СЕНТЯБРЬ	ОКТЯБРЬ	НОЯБРЬ	ДЕКАБРЬ	
П	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	П
В	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	В
С	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	С
Ч	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	Ч
П	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	П
С	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	С
В	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	В

MONTHS

Russian	English
ЯНВАРЬ	JANUARY
ФЕВРАЛЬ	FEBRUARY
МАРТ	MARCH
АПРЕЛЬ	APRIL
МАЙ	MAY
ИЮНЬ	JUNE
ИЮЛЬ	JULY
АВГУСТ	AUGUST
СЕНТЯБРЬ	SEPTEMBER
ОКТЯБРЬ	OCTOBER
НОЯБРЬ	NOVEMBER
ДЕКАБРЬ	DECEMBER

DAYS of the WEEK

Russian	*Abbrev.	English
ПОНЕДЕЛЬНИК	ПН.	MONDAY
ВТОРНИК	ВТ.	TUESDAY
СРЕДА	СР.	WEDNESDAY
ЧЕТВЕРГ	ЧТ.	THURSDAY
ПЯТНИЦА	ПТ.	FRIDAY
СУББОТА	СБ.	SATURDAY
ВОСКРЕСЕНЬЕ	ВС.	SUNDAY

*See alternate form in calendar above.